Iarl and *Iormun-*; *Arya-* and *Aryaman-*: A Study in Indo-European Comparative Mythology[1]

JOHN D. BENGTSON
Association for the Study of Language in Prehistory, USA

Abstract: In 1854 Martin Haug of Heidelberg suggested a root connection between the obscure German god *Irmin* and the minor Indic god *Aryaman*. Almost a century later (1952) Jan de Vries of Leiden agreed, with some reservations, and since then this theory has remained in dispute. In my study of this subject several arguments support the Haug – Vries hypothesis:

- **Phonetic compatibility** between OHG *Irmin*, ON *Iǫrmun-*, and Indic *Aryaman* (and between Nordic *Iarl* and Indic *Arya*). All are derivable from an IE root *$*H_1$er-* 'free man, clan member'.
- **Phonetic and semantic parallels,** such as between Old Swedish *iarl* and *iarmun-*, Old English *eorl* and *eormen-*; OIr *aire* and *Airem*; and OInd *árya-, aryá-, ā ́rya-* and *Aryamán-*.
- **Functional compatibility** between German *irmindiot* 'the collective human race', *Irminsūl* 'universalis columna', OE *eormen-wyrt* 'mallow' (medicinal plant), etc., Indo-Iranian *A(i)ryaman* 'god of marriage, hospitality, healing', and the Irish hero *Airem*, all associated with Dumézil's "first function."
- **Patterning of personal names** like OHG *Irman-frīt, Irman-drūt*, etc., like other IE names compounded from names of deities, e.g. ON *Ás-ráðr* (*áss* 'god' + *ráðr* 'help[ed]' = OHG *Ans-rat*). OI *Aryama-rādha-* 'favored by Aryaman' has a precise parallel in OHG *Irmin-rat* 'helped by Irmin'.
- **Cosmology:** An old German name for the Great Bear constellation was *Irmines-wagen* 'Irmin's wagon', and, according to Grimm, the Milky Way galaxy was **Irmin(es)-strasse* 'Irmin's street'; cf. OI *Aryamṇáḥ pánthāḥ* 'path of Aryaman' = Milky Way.

The argument that *Irmin* simply means 'great, immense, elevated' and is the sole remnant of the Indo-European middle participle in Germanic is implausible; the form *Irmines-* is clearly the genitive form of a name. The oldest sources and comparative mythology point to *Irmin / Iǫrmun* as some kind of divine or heroic entity closely connected with sovereignty, ancestry, and the collective life of the people (*irmin-diot*). In the post-Christian literary traditions of the Germanic and Celtic peoples the original patterns were transformed and distorted.

[1] This paper was written for the Tenth Annual International Conference on Comparative Mythology: Time and Myth: the Temporal and the Eternal; May 26-28, 2016; Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic.

Abbreviations

Av	Avestan	OS	Old Saxon
Brg	Burgundian	OSw	Old Swedish
MP	Middle Persian	PC	Proto-Celtic
OE	Old English	PG	Proto-Germanic
OHG	Old High German	PIE	Proto-Indo-European
OI	Old Indic (= Vedic, Sanskrit)	PII	Proto-Indo-Iranian
OIr	Old Irish	PIr	Proto-Iranian
ON	Old Norse (usually = Old Icelandic)	VG	Visigothic
OP	Old Persian		

0. Introduction

The aim of this study is to survey the discussion surrounding an obscure and problematic word (or name) attested sporadically in Germanic sources as *Irmin, Irman, Eormen, Iarmun, Iǫrmun*, etc., and its etymological and thematic connections with the Germanic word *earl* (*eorl, iarl*, *jarl*), and with postulated Indo-Iranian cognates *Aryaman* (*Airiiaman*) and *arya, Arya*. I hope to show in my final remarks that a re-examination of these often elusive and mysterious Germanic terms, within a wide range of comparative linguistics and mythology, might result in a firmer understanding of the ancient Germanic (and Indo-European) mythological system and worldview, which scholars for the past few centuries have sought to piece together from the shreds of evidence left.

The point of departure on this philological excursion is the *Poetic Edda*, in which the disyllable *iǫrmun-* is found as an element in three different compound words or names. Return first to the tale of chaotic destruction in *Vǫlospá*, str. 50: *"Snýz iǫrmungandr í iǫtunmóði"* 'the world-serpent writhes in a fit of giant-rage'. Here the great snake usually known as *miðgarðsormr* is referred to in a compound name which unites the elements *iǫrmun* and *gandr,* both, in themselves surrounded with mystery. *Gandr* means something like 'magic wand' or a magic implement or being of some sort.[2] Old Icelandic *Iǫrmun-* (Modern *Jörmun-*) is traditionally "a prefix in a few old mythical words, implying something *huge, vast, superhuman*."[3] The corresponding Old English prefix *eormen-* is similarly interpreted as 'universal, immense, whole, general'.[4] Accordingly, *iǫrmungandr* is translated as 'the Great Monster'[5] or, more prosaically, 'den vældige stok' ('the mighty stick').[6] Apart from the *Poetic Edda* this term is found in the skald Bragi's *Ragnarsdrápa* (ninth century), in a poetic narration of Thor's 'fishing' for the world serpent in a violent struggle.

[2] Cleasby & Vigfusson (1957), p. 188.
[3] Ibid., p. 328: *jörmun-*.
[4] Bosworth (1898): *eormen-*; Hall (1916).
[5] Cleasby & Vigfusson (1957), p. 328.
[6] Jónsson (1966), p. 331.

The second such compound is *iǫrmungrund* (f.), referring to the earth with the implication of great expanse.[7] Thus in *Grímnismál* 20 of the *Poetic Edda*: "*Huginn oc Muninn fliúga hverian dag iǫrmungrund yfir*" ("H. and M. fly over the great earth every day'). The poetic terms fits well in this intoxicating poem, and we find it also in the poem on the Karlevi runestone (probably Old Danish, ca. 1000), in the kenning untils iarmun kruntar, interpreted as 'the earth of the sea king Ondill', i.e. 'the sea'.[8] The term is also found in one of the skaldic poems of Sturla Þórðarson, and the parallel OE *eormengrund* suggests its use in a common Germanic poetic tradition.[9] A similar poetic term is preserved in the early skaldic poem *Haustlǫng* by Þióðolfr hvinverski: *iǫrmunþriótr*, or 'great enemy', referring to the giant Hrungnir.[10] One personal name with this element is found in the *Poetic Edda*, in five of the lays, and in the *Ragnarsdrápa*. This is *Iǫrmunreccr*, the legendary Gothic king attested also in the Latinized Gothic form *Ermanaricus*.[11] Finally, the Icelandic *þulur* provide a few obscure references, most importantly *Iǫrmunr* as a cognomen of Óðinn.[12]

I. Interpretations and variants of *iǫrmun-, Iǫrmunr, iarmun-, eormen-, Irmin, Irman*, etc.

What are we to make of all these words? The general consensus has been to read a sense of great expanse, size or power in the form *iǫrmun-*, a sense which happens to fit each of the examples given above. (But see below about OE *eormenwyrt* and *eormenlēaf*, which do not fit.) Some have sought in the form an early Germanic hero, or even god, who gradually lost importance. A very few have gone further and suggested a connection with the minor Indo-Iranian deity *Aryaman* and the Irish hero *Airem*. But before a detailed discussion of the divergent views I shall briefly summarize the Germanic attestations of *Iǫrmun/Irmin* from outside the Nordic area. Grimm,[13] and a century later Vries,[14] have comprehensively listed and discussed the various forms.

In Gothic the element appears in proper names, such as the fourth century king *Ermanaricus* (*~ Hermanaricus, Ermenericus, Ermeniricus*).[15] This is a common Germanic name (see Table 1):[16]

[7] Ibid.
[8] Gordon (1957), p. 264.
[9] Bosworth (1898) *eormengrund*; Hall (1916).
[10] Jónsson (1966), p. 331.
[11] Ibid.; Cleasby & Vigfusson (1957), p. 328.
[12] Jónsson (1966), p. 331; Turville-Petre (1964), p. 62.
[13] Grimm (1882) I, pp. 351-362.
[14] Vries (1952).
[15] Lehmann (1986), E4. Note that the *H* was a silent letter in Latinized forms such as *Hirmin, Herminones, Hermengildus, Hermunduri*, etc. "The aspirate given by the Romans to Herminones, as to Hermunduri, is strictly no part of the German word, but is also very commonly retained by Latin writers of the Mid. Ages in proper names compounded with Irmin. In the name of the historical Arminius Tacitus leaves it out" Grimm (1882) I, p. 351.
[16] Toporova (1996), p. 13.

Table 1. Germanic personal names containing **Ermina- ~ *Ermana- ~ *Erma-*:

Proto-Germanic	meaning	East Germanic	West Germanic	North Germanic	Toporova (1996)
**Ermana-rīkaz*	'great ruler'[17] or 'Irmin's ruler'	Goth *(H)ermanaricus*	OE *Eormenrīc*, OS *Emrīcus*, OHG *Irmanrīh*	ON *Iǫrmunrec(c)r*	p. 13, no. 36
**Erma-wulbaz*	'wolf of Irmin'[18]	VG *Ermulf*	OHG *Hermolf*		p. 26, no. 59
**Ermina-friduz*	'protected by Irmin' or 'Irmin's peace'[19]	VG *Ermanfred*	OHG *Irmanfrit, Irmenfrid, Irminfrid*		p. 26, no. 60
**Ermina-geldaz*	'worthy of (rewarded by) Irmin'	VG *Hermengildus,*	OHG *Ermenegild, Erminigild*		p. 26, no. 61
**Ermina-heldjō*	'battle of Irmin'	VG *Herminichild*[20]	OHG *Irmenhilt*[21]		p. 69

To these we can add the uncompounded name, attested as Ἀρμένιος (Strabo) / *Arminius* (Tacitus), name of the Cheruscan hero who defeated and annihilated a Roman army in the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest (ca. 9 CE),[22] and *Erminus*, the legendary ancestor of several Germanic tribes (see **Table 4**).[23] Grimm cites the 'weak' form *Irmino*, an abbot in Charlemagne's time, and a female name *Iarmin*, attested in a deed.[24] At the present time *Irmin* is still a common German name, for both males and females.[25]

Consistent with the idea of Irmin as chief god of the Saxons, most of the *Irmin-* names are attested in Saxon and High German territory: *Irminolt, Irminold* (**-waldaz* 'power[ful]'), *Irmingard, Irmgard* (**-gardjō* 'fence[d], protected'), and short forms and diminutives *Irma, Irmina, Irmela*, and surnames such as

[17] Not only "le roi puissant et omnipotent" but also "notre propre roi," the early concept of a king of divine origin whose presence assures the smooth operation of everything in the realm: Vries (1952), pp. 24-5.
[18] PG **wulfa-* (m.) 'wolf' / **wulgī- ~ *wulbjō-* (f.) 'she-wolf' (Kroonen 2013, p. 598).
[19] PG **friþu-* 'friendship, peace' > OHG *fridu* 'peace; protection, security' (Kroonen 2013, p. 156).
[20] *Herminichild*, husband of Ingund, is mentioned by Grimm (1882) I, p. 3, who cites Gregory of Tours' *Historia Francorum*.
[21] Otto (1889), p. 17.
[22] Grimm (1835), pp. 211-12; Grimm (1882) I, p. 364. Giesebrecht (1837) proposed an interesting hypothesis that Arminius was the Latin cognomen of the hero known in Germanic epics as *Siegfried/Sigurðr*; further developed later by Vigfusson & Powell (1886).
[23] Note that the names with **armin-* date earlier (1st century CE) than those with **ermin-* (4th century and later).
[24] Grimm (1882) I, p. 351.
[25] E.g., ♀Irmin Kamp (born 1940), German sculptor; ♂Irmin Schmidt (born 1937), German musician and composer.

Ehrmanntraut (OHG *Irmandrūt*, with **-þrūdjō* 'power, force').[26] Grimm, Otto and Zollinger cite *Ermenmar, Irminmar, Ermemar, Ermenomar* (**-mēriz* 'famous'); *Irminhart* (**-harduz* 'hard, firm'), *Irmandegan* (**-þegnaz* 'thane, freeman');[27] *Ermenger* (**-gaizaz* 'lance, spear'); *Ermelint* (**-lendō* 'linden'); *Irmanprecht* (**-berhtaz* 'bright'); *Irminwin, Ermoin, Armin* (**-weniz* 'friend'); *Irminlev* (**-laibaz* 'heir, successor'); *Irmindiu, Irmendio* (**-þewaz* 'servant');[28] *Irminot* (**=neutaz* 'companion'); *Irmenswint* (**-swenþaz* 'strong').[29] The last Thuringian king was named *Irminfried* (*Irnvrīt*: see Table 1)[30] and his tribe is most likely to be identified with the Latinized tribal name *Hermunduri*.[31]

Place names that include the element are *Ermschwerd* (in Hesse: older *Ermeneswerethe*,[32] ca. 1000 CE) and *Armenseul* in Germany (Westphalia), *Irminperg* (*Irminperhi*) in Upper Austria, and *Ermelo* in Holland.[33] Apart from such isolated names one stands out in mythical annals due to an historic incident. When Charlemagne in 772 subdued Westphalia and the Saxons they destroyed the temple and grove of *Irminsūl*, a great pillar or idol (but some historical annals differ in details of this account).[34] Åke Ström has described the Irminsūl as a "shintai," a spiritual repository, as in Shinto.[35] One annalist described it as '*universalis columna*, quasi sustinens omnia' = *Weltsäule, axis mundi*.[36] The cognate term *irminsûl ~ irmansūl* is found in OHG glosses, bleached of its mythological meaning, translating *pyramida* or *colossus*.[37] Grimm cited a German name for the constellation Great Bear (Ursa Major): *Irmineswagen* (see **Appendix A**).[38]

A number of poetic compounds occur in the early West Germanic languages. We find the OHG *irmingot* in the *Hildebrandslied*, apparently referring to the Christian supreme God.[39] The poet of the Old Saxon *Heliand* similarly used words such as *irminthiod* 'the human race'.[40] Old English sources also have the cognate term

[26] Grimm (1882) I, p. 351; Otto (1889), p. 17.
[27] "The original meaning was 'retainer', i.e. an aristocrat dependant [*sic*] of a king or nobleman who gives service in return for patronage" (Kroonen 2013, p. 536).
[28] PG **þewa-* 'servant' (Kroonen 2013, p. 541). Toporova cites **þegwaz*.
[29] Grimm (1815), note 65; Otto (1889); Zollinger (1939).
[30] Grimm (1882) I, p. 359.
[31] Vries (1952), p. 20; Grimm (1882) I, p. 359.
[32] *-werd, -werethe* = OHG *werid* 'island'; cf. OE *waroð* 'shore, bank', *wearð* id.: Noreen (1894), pp. 65, 87; Buck (1949), no. 1.27.
[33] Documented as *Irminlo* (*-lo* = OS *lōh* 'grove', OE *lēah* 'meadow', etc.) in 855 CE (Vries 1952, p. 21); Grimm (1882) I, pp. 352, 355; Gerhard Köbler, Universität Innsbruck: http://www.koeblergerhard.de/wikiling_1/townDirectory?page=1309.
[34] Vries (1952), pp. 18-19; M. Springer, "Irminsul," in Hoops (2000), vol. 15, pp. 504-5.
[35] "Der gott Irmin kann vielleicht schon mit dem altindischen *Aryaman* zusammengestellt werden und dürfte ein guter germanischer Schintai sein. *Irminsûl* ist also 'Säule des gottes Irmin', der kultisch die Weltachse repräsenterte" (Å. Ström 1975), p. 81.
[36] Vries (1952), pp. 18-19. Cf. Witzel (2012), pp. 134-37.
[37] Vries (1952), p. 20.
[38] Grimm (1882) I, pp. 355-6; Grimm cites "Leibn. scr. 1, 9" (Leibniz [1707–1710] *Scriptores rerum Brunsvicensium*); "Eccard, Fr. or. 1, 883" (Eckhart [1729]); "De orig. Germ. 397" (Eckhart [1750]).
[39] Vries (1952), p. 21.
[40] Ibid.

eormenþēod, and *eormencynn* 'mankind', *eormenstrȳnd* 'race, generation', *eormenlāf*, the dragon's treasure in *Beowulf*.[41] OE *eormengrund* 'wide world' has a Nordic cognate in *iǫrmungrund* (see above). These terms, North Germanic and West Germanic, suggest a common Germanic tradition underlying the use of this element *Iǫrmun/Irmin*, but in themselves reveal little of what the original meaning may have been. The conjecture by some, that this word underlies the national name *German*, would point to considerable importance of the term if this is true.[42] The tribal names *Herminones* (used by Tacitus) and *Hermunduri* would seem to support this hypothesis.

Åke Ström has made the important observation that the compounds listed above have Old Norse typological parallels like *týr-spakr* 'ur-weise / godly-wise', *týr-framr* 'weit nach vorn', *týr-hraustr* 'valiant as a god', *njarð-láss* 'starkes Schloss / a kind of charmed latch', *njarð-gjǫrð* 'starker Gürtel / the close girdle, epithet of the girdle of Thor', based on the god-names *Týr* and *Njǫrðr*. Here the first elements have an intensifying function, similar to that in English *god-awful* 'extremely unpleasant or disagreeable : abominable' (Webster). Ström notes that some such terms continued to be used even after conversion to the Christian faith, just as some Germanic (and Romance) peoples retained at least some of the planetary weekday-names (based on names of gods) like *Tuesday* (*mardi*), *Wednesday* (*mercredi*), etc.[43] But it seems that a few generations after conversion the terms like *týr-spakr* gradually went out of use, as memories of the old gods dimmed, while theonymic weekday-names persisted in many places.[44]

II. History of the Irmin/Aryaman discussion

Grimm's discussion from the early nineteenth century is still basic. Starting from Tacitus' *Herminones* he enumerated a host of attested forms from the Germanic world, together with his learned speculations. As the crux of the question Grimm wrote:

Granted that irmansûl expressed word for word no more than 'huge pillar', yet to the people that worshipped it it must have been a divine image, standing for a particular God. … either he was one of the three great divinities, Wôdan, Thonar, Tiu, or some being distinct from them.[45]

On the basis of historical evidence Grimm concluded that "In Hirmin the Saxons appear to have worshipped a *Wôdan imaged as a warrior*." (But see below about

[41] Bosworth, p. 254; Hall (1916).
[42] R. Much-Wein, cited by Hellquist (1948) I, p. 277: *German*.
[43] Å. Ström (1975), p. 81; Cleasby (1874), pp. 456, 647. See Buck (1949), pp. 1004-9, for day-names in IE languages.
[44] "The compds. of this word [*jörmun-*] … occur in old Scandin. poets only" (Cleasby 1874, p. 328). Such terms, based on *jörmun-*, *týr-*, *njarð-*, are not found, for example, in the modern Icelandic dictionary by Sigurðsson (1970).
[45] Grimm (1882) I, pp. 352-3.

Tiu.) He then speculated as to the existence of an ancestral hero **Irmino* as distinct from *Irmin* the god.[46] Grimm suggested traces of the god Irmin, and fall of the Irminsūl, remained in Saxon folklore:

> In Saxon Hesse (on the Diemel), in the districts of Paderborn, Ravensberg and Münster, in the bishopric of Minden and the duchy of Westphalia, the people have kept alive the rhyme:
>
> *Hermen*, sla dermen,
> sla pipen, sla trummen,
> de kaiser wil kummen
> met hamer un stangen,
> wil *Hermen* uphangen.
>
> Hermen is challenged, as it were, to strike up his war-music, to sound the catgut, pipe and drum; but the foe draws nigh with maces and staves, and will hang up Hermen … . It is not impossible that in these rude words, which have travelled down the long tradition of centuries, are preserved the fragments of a lay that was first heard when Charles destroyed the Irmensûl.[47]

Here, as elsewhere, we see the gradual merger of the mostly forgotten *Irmin, Erman* with *Her(r)mann* (< **Harja-mannaz* 'battle-man').[48] For the remainder of his long discussion of *Irmin* Grimm attempted various conjectures surrounding the cosmological significance of *Irmineswagen* and related terms, a point to which we shall return.

In 1854 another German, Martin Haug of Heidelberg, was possibly the first scholar to suggest a connection between the Germanic *Irmin* and the Indic *Aryaman*.[49] It is well known that the Saxons worshipped another prominent god, *Saxnōt*, who corresponded to Týr/Tīw/Ziu elsewhere.[50] In the Saxon baptismal vow new believers promised to forsake *Thunaer ende Uuôden ende Saxnôte*.[51]

Late in the nineteenth century, Karl Müllenhoff devoted much space to the study of *Irmin*. He identified Irmin as a god whose cult centered on the Westphalian

---

[46] Ibid., p. 354.
[47] Grimm (1882) I, p. 355.
[48] "Man hat die Irmensäule von Hermes, Mars, Ares, Eres, Heermann (Kriegsmann) und Herman (Arminius) hergeleitet; etwas wahres scheint immer durch, allein es wurde blindlings ergriffen und nirgends bewiesen" (Grimm 1815, p. 47). E.g., in present-day New Ulm, Minnesota (U.S.A.), Arminius is celebrated as "Hermann the German." http://www.ci.new-ulm.mn.us/index.asp?SEC=96D3F644-BCE7-4EAF-8213-8FEAA372B8F9&Type=B_BASIC
[49] M. Haug, cited by Vries (1952), p. 26.
[50] Puhvel suggests that Saxnōt and Irmin may have constituted a pair, to the Saxons, parallel to Aryaman:Mitra (Puhvel 1987, pp. 193, 200).
[51] As cited by Å. Ström (1975), p. 83.

Eresberg (*mons Martis*) and is identical with Mars/Er/Tīwaz.[52] However he objected to Haug's conjecture linking Irmin to Aryaman, on the ground first that the middle syllable *-ya-* of Aryaman would not slip out easily in Germanic, and second, that the ending cognate with OI *-man* (nom. *-mā*) would be **-mo* in OHG and OS. Because of the variations *ermin-, erman-, ermun-* Müllenhoff theorized that the last syllable was opened and vocalized only after the thematic vowel had been lost, and postulated a ground form **ërmnas*, cognate with Greek ὄρμενος (aorist 2 middle participle of ὄρνυμι 'stir (up), urge, incite'), which would be the sole remnant of the Indo-European middle participle in Germanic. He derived this participle from the verb **er-* 'to set in motion, excite', etc., thus the proper meaning of *irmin* being '*excelsus, erhaben*, elevated'.[53] Most other etymologists since then have generally agreed with this solution.[54] Others, following Thieme (1938), have held that Irmin is phonetically incompatible with Aryaman, since the latter is based on PIE **alio-* 'other'.[55] These arguments seemed to silence the connection of Irmin with Aryaman for decades.

In a 1930 article Jan de Vries discussed the Gmc.**gin(wa)-* and related it to *Iǫrmungandr,* up to that time commonly interpreted as 'the great stick'. He argued that it was not fitting to liken the ringed serpent to a stiff stick, when both of the poetic passages where the word occurs depict a cosmic monster in vigorous motion. In Vries' opinion the meaning had to be 'the powerful magical being', *gandr* having its original meaning of 'magic wand'. Regarding *iǫrmun* he expressed doubts about the translation '*gewaltig*, powerful', noting that its occurrence in primarily religious names gives the first element a mythical coloring. In view of this Vries gave his expanded translation as 'the monster in the form of a snake, inimical to both gods and men, which winds itself around the earth'.[56] Thus Vries tacitly objected to the simple meaning of 'elevated', fixed by Müllenhoff, a point to which he would return two decades later.

In 1949 the comparative mythologist Georges Dumézil published one of his numerous studies of the Indo-European tripartite pantheon, entitled *Le troisième souverain*. This study treated the Indo-Iranian god Aryaman in depth, concluding that Aryaman was a patron of the community that designates itself as *Arya-* (i.e., the North Indians of caste who adhered to the *Vedas* and their rituals). As a collective representative of the human *Arya-* he served as a link between them and the divinities of the "first function," specifically Mitra, in the *Vedas* associated with hospitality, gift-giving, marriage and all aspects of community solidarity.[57] Dumézil

[52] Meyer (1910), p. 192 agreed: "Irmin ist sicher Tiu."
[53] Müllenhoff (1900), pp. 587-600.
[54] E.g., Lehmann (1986), E4; Mees (2003), p. 49; Orel (2003), p. 85.
[55] In agreement with Thieme, e.g., Lehmann (1986), Mayrhofer (1992); but Burrow (1949), p. 40, distinguishes OI *arí-*[1] 'devoted, trustworthy' (related to Hittite *ara-* 'friend, ally': see **Table 2**) from *arí-*[2] 'enemy' (< PIE **ali-*); Puhvel (1984), p. 120, agrees with Burrow. Dumézil (1977), pp. 233ff., disputed Thieme's thesis at length.
[56] Vries (1930).
[57] Summarized in Dumézil (1973), p. xiv.; "*Aryamán-* is original a neuter abstract, something like 'Aryanness,' the deified embodiment of social self-identification" (Puhvel 1987, p. 49).

noted that in the later Sanskrit literature Aryaman is known chiefly as king of a vaguely defined category of ancestors: the Fathers (*Pitaraḥ*). Though mentioned a hundred-odd times in the *Ṛgveda*, Aryaman is a minor deity there, and in later Hinduism he is even less prominent. Dumézil did not mention the Germanic Irmin, and in a footnote of an American edition of one of Dumézil's books Littleton states that the French scholar has never accepted the equation of Irmin and Aryaman.[58]

In 1952 Vries returned with an article devoted to the word/name Irmin. In this study catalogued the extant references to the word in Germanic sources. He objected to the equation with the Greek ὅρμενος, noting, as Müllenhoff did, that this would be the sole example of a middle participle in Germanic. He thought it highly unlikely that Germanic would develop the ablaut series **er-mana-/-mina-/-muna-* for a verbal form which it did not otherwise use, and was extant only in Greek, Sanskrit and Avestan. His own etymology proposes a nominal formation from the same root with the suffix *-meno-*.[59] Vries speculated that the word was very ancient and did not belong to the common fund of everyday speech, and that one could not rely on post-Christian sources to give the definitive pagan meaning of the word.[60]

Vries contended that compounds of the type *irmintheod* rule out the concept of 'great, universal', since the tribal mentality could not conceive of such general concepts: it would rather be the duality of *we* (the people) versus *them*, as tribal self-designations around the world attest. Since *Irminsūl* may be thought of as erected in the middle of *miðgarðr*, *irmintheod* connotes, to Vries, "the people" in all its extent as well as in all its intimacy. *Ermanarik* connotes not only "le roi puissant et omnipotent" but also "notre propre roi," the early concept of a king of divine origin whose presence assures the smooth operation of everything in the realm.[61]
Finally Vries referred to Haug's conjecture of a century earlier, linking Irmin to Aryaman. Müllenhoff's rebuttal was based on the Neogrammarian strict adherence sound laws, but Vries cited cases such as (Indic) *Parjánya-* / (Baltic) *Perkūnas* where there was a close semantic correspondence but irregular phonetic correspondence. Similarly, he claimed, we have here to do with the resemblance of the sequence *r-m-n* as well as of usage and meaning. Vries concluded with the suggestion that *Iǫrmunr* (identified as Óðinn in the *þulur*) reflected an absorption of the Dumézilian third sovereign (Aryaman) by the ascendant chief god.[62] "If the reading is correct, it probably implies that he [Óðinn] has usurped the place of another god, identical with the *Irmin* of the Saxons and the ancestor of the *Erminiones*, the great Germanic tribe."[63]

Vries returned with some of the same observations in his survey of Germanic religion. He identified Irmin with Týr and again suggested a connection with Aryaman and the Irish hero Eremon. Discussing the *sūl* (pillar) as a symbol of

[58] Dumézil (1973), p. xiv n.
[59] Vries (1952), pp. 22-23.
[60] Ibid., p. 23.
[61] Ibid., pp. 24-5.
[62] Ibid., pp. 26-7.
[63] Turville-Petre (1964), p. 62.

Irmin's original role as preserver of the world, Vries compared Indra's propping up the sky with a wagon-axle (*Ṛgveda*) and the Altaic conception of the heavenly axis as a cosmic hitching post to which stars are hitched like horses. Such a primeval concept gibes with both the Old Norse *askr yggdrasils* and the Indic *aśvattha-* ('horse place') for the world tree. He went on to suggest that the Icelandic *ǫndvegissúla*, the high-seat pillar associated with the fortune of a family, could then be seen as a microcosmic correspondence to the macrocosmic *Weltsäule*.[64]

In 1962 Ernst Philippson joined in the fray, incorrectly scorning Dumézil for nominating Irmin to the post of third sovereign (an act for which Vries instead was responsible). Philippson suggested that this "invented god" be consigned to the chapter of Germanists' fairytales, and advocated a philological method of "all induction, not deduction!"[65] The etymological dictionaries likewise differ in their treatment of *Irmin*: for example Jóhannesson and Pokorny adhere to Müllenhoff's etymology, while Vries refers back to his *Cahiers* article, quoted above.[66]

III. Arguments in favor of the original identity of *Irmin/Iǫrmun-*, *Éremón*, *Aryaman/Airiiaman*

In this section I shall cite a number of correspondences that favor a common origin for the Germanic *Irmin/Iǫrmun-*, the Indo-Iranian *Aryaman/Airiiaman*, and the Irish *Éremón*, some of which I have not seen in the published discussions. These are **(III.A)** phonological correspondences, **(III.B)** parallelism in forms and meanings of the God/hero name and the ethnic/caste name, **(III.C)** functional associations with Dumézil's "first function" and its deities, **(III.D)** patterning of proper names containing names of deities, and **(III.E)** correspondences in cosmological terminology.

III.A. Phonetics

The common feature of the consonants *r, m,* and *n* is easily seen in the three names *Irmin, Aryaman* and *Éremón*, and this is the point at which some scholars have stopped, either accepting the correspondence at face value (which is not enough, in itself, to prove the equation), or going on, as Müllenhoff did, to try to disprove the comparison. Müllenhoff's first objection was the syllable *-ya-*, present in OI but absent in the Germanic forms. But is it necessary to postulate a Proto-Germanic form with the extra syllable? The Germanic ethnic or caste term in Old Scandinavian (runic) *erilaR* or *erilaz*[67] corresponds closely in meaning to the Indic *árya-* 'person of high caste', yet the two terms are formed with different PIE suffixes, **-elo-* and **-iyo-*, respectively. Is it not likewise possible that the respective

[64] Vries (1956 - 7), II, pp. 14, 16, 384-391.
[65] Philippson (1962).
[66] Jóhannesson (1956), p. 64; Pokorny (1959), pp. 228, 326; Vries (1962), p. 295.
[67] Hellquist (1948), I, pp. 418-19: *jarl*.

god-names could have been formed differently in the Indo-European dialects? Classic examples, such as English *navel*, Latin *umbilicus*, Greek ὀμφαλός and Sanskrit *nā́bhi*, indicate the existence of cognates which cannot be reduced to a single prototype.[68]

Müllenhoff's second objection was that OI *Aryamā́* (nominative) should correspond phonetically to a Germanic**Er(ya)mō*. It must be pointed out, however, that most of the Germanic attestations do not involve the nominative case, but rather compounds such as *iǫrmun-grund* formed from the nominal base, or with the genitive, as in *Irmines-wagen, Ermenes-werethe* (cf. OI *Aryamṇás*, genitive). It is then possible for a new nominative such as (the late attested) *Iǫrmunr* to be formed by analogy. The Germanic types *Hermun-duri* and *iǫrmun-grund* show the ablaut gradation corresponding exactly to the OI compound *aryama-deva-*, in which Germanic *un* and OI *a* are the regular reflexes of the Indo-European zero-grade **ŋ̥*.
In sum, I suggest the following developments of Proto-Indo-European (PIE) **H₁er-* 'member of one's own clan', with natural semantic developments (see **B**) > 'free man, person', etc. (see **Table 2**).

Table 2. Parallel formation of Germanic **arị̄a-*, **er-ila-, *Er-mina-*; Celtic **arị̄a-ko-s*, **Arị̄a-mon*; Indo-Iranian **arị̄a-*, *ārị̄a-ka-*, **Arị̄a-man-*:

Germanic	PG **arị̄a-* 'noble'; **er-ila- / *er-ula- / *er-la-* 'leader (of clan)';	Old Runic arjostez (Tune inscription, 400 CE) 'most noble' < PG **arị̄ōsta-ez*;[69] Runic erilaR 'a social class of leaders' (later: 'magicians, runemasters'?); ON *iarl, jarl, iærl* 'free man, nobleman, (king's) henchman'; OS *erl* 'man, noble man'; OHG *erl-* (in names); OE *eorl* 'noble man' > Eng. *earl*.[70]
	PG **er-mana- / *er-mina- / *er-muna- / *ar-mina-* 'Irmin / Armin(ius)' (god / hero)[71]	ON *Iǫrmunr* [cognomen of Óðinn],[72] *iǫrmun-* [component of kennings], Old Danish (Runic) iarmun;[73] OE *eormen-*; OS *irmin-*; OHG *irmin-, irman-*; (Greek) Ἀρμένιος, Ἀρμήνιος, (Latin) *Armenius, Arminius*: proper name of the king of the Cherusci.

[68] Burrow (1955), p. 11.
[69] Antonsen (1975), pp. 44-45.
[70] Noreen (1894), pp. 20, 86; Buck (1949), p. 1326, no. 19.36; E. Ebel, "Jarl," in Hoops (2000), vol. 16, pp. 29-33; "The root appears to be **er-*, possibly cognate with **aryo* king, ruler; the three differing suffixes *-il-, -ul-, -l-* are ablaut variants" (Haugen 1976, p. 123). For a different interpretation and etymology: Mees (2003).
[71] The Germanic alternation **er-/*ar-* is quite regular from the point of view of IE ablaut, in laryngeal perspective **H₁er-/*H₁or-*.
[72] Jónsson (1966), p. 331.
[73] Gordon (1957), p. 264.

Celtic	PC **arị̂ak-s* 'Herr'	OIr *aire* 'noble, chief', [gen.] *airech*; Gaulish *Arilus, Arillus* [man's name: cf. PG **er-ila-*]
	PC **arị̂o-* (< PIE **H₁ŗ̥ị̂o-*); **arị̂o-mn̥-*	Gaulish *Ariomanus, Arimanus* [man's name], (Galatian) *Ariamnes* [name of a chief: acc. Ἀριάμνην]; OIr *Airem,* [gen.] *Airemon, Eremon:* 'one of the mythical ancestors of the Irish people'[74]
Greek		(Thessalian) ἐρέας [eréas] 'children'[75]
Anatolian		Hittite *āra-* 'belonging (or: proper) to one's own social group, communally accepted or acceptable, congruent with social order'; nouns: *arā-* 'member of one's group, peer, comrade, partner, fellow, friend', *arāwa-* 'free (from)'; Lycian *arã* 'as a due' (= Hittite *āra-* 'right, proper concern, due'; Indo-Iranian **ára-* 'fitting, right, proper'), *arawa* 'free', *arus* 'citizens', etc.[76]
Indo-Iranian	PIIr **arị̂a-* 'our own people, Aryan' **ára-* 'fitting, right, proper'[77]	OI *arí-* 'devoted, trustworthy', *árya-*, *aryá-* 'kind, devoted, pious', *ā́rya* 'master, lord, noble, Aryan', *āryaka-* 'venerable man', *aryamán-* 'friendly, allied', *Aryamán-* (nom. *Aryamā́*) 'a god'; Av *airya-*, OP *ariya-* 'Aryan, Iranian' (n., adj.), Av *airyana-* (adj.) 'Aryan, Iranian'; PIr **arị̂ānām* [gen. pl.] (*xšaθra-*) > MP *ērān* 'Iran', *ērān-šahr* 'land of Iran'.[78]
	PIIr **arị̂a-man-*	OI *aryamán-* (nom. *aryamā́*) 'hospitable friend, patron, member of one's own cultural community, fellow citizen;' [*Aryamán-*] 'Name of an Āditya, patron deity of hospitality and marriage'; Av *Airiiaman- ~ airyəman-* 'a friend, a comrade, a man belonging to the upper castes of Aryan society'; MP (Pehlevi) *ērmān*; MP (Turfan) *'ry'm'n* 'friend'; Classical Persian *ērmān* 'guest'; Khotanese Saka *armāna* 'kindness'.[79]

[74] Holder (1896–) pp. 214-15, 684; Stokes & Bezzenberger (1894), p. 19.
[75] Schmidt (1867), edition of Hesychius' Lexicon, p. 614: "ἐρέας · τέκνα. Θεσσαλοί"; Beekes (2010), p. 451.
[76] Puhvel (1984), 1/2, pp. 116–121; Kloekhorst (2008), p. 198. "Hittite *āra-* 'right, properly' & *arā-* 'friend', *arāwa-* 'free' … are derivable not only from **H₂or°* (so Kloekhorst with respect to Greek ἄριστος), but also from (a) **H₁or°* or (b) **H₁ŗ(H)-*, cf. ad (a) Hittite *arra-* 'arse, anus', Greek ὄρρος id., Old High German *ars* id. < **H₁orso-*, where **H₁-* is proven by Old Irish *err* 'tail, end' < **H₁ersā* (Kloekhorst 2008, 199), and ad (b) Hittite *ariye/a-* 'to consult an oracle, determine by oracle' < **H₁ŗH₁-i̯e/o-* vs. Greek ἐρέω 'I ask' (Kloekhorst 2008, 202) [V. Blažek, p.c.].
[77] Puhvel (1984), 1/2, p. 120.
[78] "Gastfreund, Patron, Angehöriger der eigenen Kulturgemeinschaft, Gesittungsgenosse; Name eines Āditya, Schutzgottheit der Gastfreundschaft und der Ehe" (Mayrhofer 1992, p. 121); Bartholomae (1904), p. 198; Rastorgueva & Ėdel'man (2000), p. 223; Burrow (1955), pp. 14-5, 40, 184.
[79] Bartholomae (1904), p. 198; Rastorgueva & Ėdel'man (2000), p. 223.

III.B. Phonetic and semantic parallels

The tie that obviously exists between OI *árya-* 'person of caste' and the god *Aryaman* has already been noted, the latter being, in Dumézil's words the "patron of the community that designates itself as *Arya*."[80] Dumézil sees a similar tie between the Irish *aire, aireach* 'free-man, noble' and the name of the ancestral hero *Airem*.[81] Similarly in Germanic we find the terms erilaR ~ irilaR (Runic) and the English *earl*, etc., with connotations of nobility or elitism, which I would suggest are closely tied to the name *Irmin*. Note the phonological parallelism of Old Swedish *iarl* and *iarmun-*, Old English *eorl* and *eormen-*, and the Latinized tribal names *Heruli* and *Hermun-duri*. These examples cited from Indic, Celtic and Germanic indicate differences in suffix formation, but also striking parallels between a caste or ethnic term on the one hand and the name of a god or hero on the other.

Table 3.a. Germanic personal names containing **Arį̣a-, *Ari-*:

Latin transcription		**Gothic form**	**Proto-Germanic**	**Meaning**
Ariaricus	King of Goths, 4th c. CE	**Arja-reiks*	**Arja-rīkaz*	noble king
Ariarith	Vandal, 6th c. CE	**Arja-rēþs*	**Arja-rēþaz*	noble counsel(or)
Arigernus	Ostrogoth, 6th c. CE	**Ari-gaírns*	**Arja-gernaz*	zealous noble (?)
Arimundus	Burgund? 486 or 529 CE	**Ari-munds*	**Arja-munduz*	noble hand (protection)

Some early Germanic personal names (in Latin transcription) show a different form, **arja-, *ari-*, which seems even more compatible with OI *árya-*, etc., according to Schönfeld (see **Table 3.a**).[82]

On the other hand, we must beware that such names are not instead (1) of Celtic (Gaulish) origin, or (2) containing PG **harja-* 'army, troop, host': (1) the contacts between Germans and Celts were often quite intimate two or three millennia ago; for example, the PG word **rīkaz* (among others) is itself of Celtic origin; thus the similar names *Ariogaisus, Ariovistus, Ariovindus, Ariomanus*, applied to Goths and other Germans, are probably rather of Celtic origin; (2) *h* was a silent letter in post-Classical Latin (as mentioned earlier in regard to *Irmin ~ Hirmin ~ Hermann*), so that the above names can be interpreted as **Harja-rīkaz* 'king of the troops' or 'mighty in battle', etc.[83]

[80] Dumézil (1973), p. xiv.
[81] Dumézil (1941).
[82] Schönfeld (1911), pp. 25-29.
[83] Thus by Toporova (1996), who interprets all of these names as compounds of **harja-*: see p. 16, no. 65; p. 28, no. 92; p. 29, nos. 94 & 95. These interpretations are supported by cognates with initial /h/ such as OS *Herrīch*, OE *Hererǣd*, OHG *Haricarn*, and ON *Hermundr* respectively.

Table 3.b. Germanic personal names containing **Erla-*:[84]

Proto-Germanic	meaning	East Germanic	West Germanic	North Germanic
**Erla-baldaz*	'bold ruler'	VG *Arlabaldus*	OHG *Erlabald*	ON *Jarlbaldr*
**Erla-friduz*	'noble (man) (having) protection'[85]	VG *Arlefredus*	OHG *Erlafrid*	
**Erla-wulbaz*	'noble (man) wolf'	Brg *Arlulfus*	OS *Erlolfus* OHG *Erlulf*	
**Erla-weniz*	'noble friend'		OHG *Erlwin*[86]	

Toporova, accepting the cognation of PG **Erla-* and OI *Ārya-*, cites an example in which both elements are cognate, in her view, in Germanic and Indo-Aryan: OHG *Erleverius* 'protecting the ruler' (< PG **Erla-warjaz*) = OI *Āryavarman* 'protection of the Arya' (PIE **u̯er-* 'to close, cover, guard, save').[87] Other personal names derived from **erla-* include Langobardic *Erlingus*, ON *Erlingr* ("dimin. of jarl, *an earl*"); Old Swedish, Old Danish *Erland, Erlend*, ON *Erlendr*, *Erlandr*.[88]

In Old English the compounds of *eorl* were quite abundant, e.g. *eorl-cund* 'noble' (cf. OI *Āryajāta* [proper name], since OI *jāta-* = PG **kunþa-* < PIE **gn̥to-*), *eorl-dōm* 'earldom, rank of an earl' (ON *jarl-dómr*), *eorl-gebyrd* 'noble birth', *eorl-isc* 'of noble rank', *eorl-lic* 'chivalrous, manly', *eorl-mægen* 'band of noble warriors', *eorl-riht* 'earl's right', *eorl-scipe* 'manliness, courage', etc.[89] Likewise in Old Icelandic: *jarla-skáld* 'poet of earls', *jarls-efni* 'a young earl, earl's heir', *jarls-maðr* 'an earl's man, follower', *jarls-ríki* 'an earldom', *jarls-sæti* 'an earl's seat', *jarl-borinn* 'earl-born', etc.[90]

While the association of PG **er-ila- / *er-ula- / *er-la-* 'free man > noble' with OI *árya-* 'noble' seems very attractive, especially semantically, and has been supported by several scholars, including Vries (1962), Haugen (1976), and Toporova (1996),[91] it should be mentioned that alternative origins of the PG words have been proposed. Antonsen suggested Lithuanian *erẽlis* 'eagle', Prussian *arelis*, Old Slavic *orъlъ* id., but the semantic connection and phonetic development are difficult.[92] After considering several alternatives, Mees settles on PIE **H₁er-* / (*o*-grade) **H₁or-*

[84] Vries (1962), p. 104; Toporova (1996), p. 13, no. 35; p. 26, no. 57; p. 26, no. 58; p. 69.
[85] 'благородного (человека) защиту (имеющий)' (Toporova).
[86] Otto (1889). p. 42.
[87] Formed in a parallel way: VG *Alwarus*, ON *Alvǫr*, OHG *Aloara* < **Ala-war(j)az* 'all-protecting'; ON *Ásvǫr*, OS *Ansuerus*, OHG *Ansverus* < **Ansu-warjaz* 'tutelary of the Aesir' (Toporova 1996, p. 10, no. 6; p. 39, no. 50; p. 190, no. 3; Pokorny 1959, I, 280).
[88] Cleasby (1874), p. 133; Hellquist (1948), p. 188; Vries (1962), p. 104.
[89] Hall (1916), p. 206.
[90] Cleasby (1874), p. 324; to *jarls-efni* cf. *Þorfinnr Karlsefni* 'Þ. Manstuff' (Gordon 1957, p. 411).
[91] Vries (1962), Haugen (1976), Toporova (1996); Hellquist (1948) is noncommittal about the IE origin of *jarl*.
[92] Antonsen (1975), p. 36; Mees (2003), p. 47.

"'swell', 'extend', 'excite', and even 'right', 'proper' (thus 'pure, genuine')."[93] Derivatives of this root include ON *iara* (*jara*) 'battle', *ern* 'able, energetic', OE *ernost* 'battle, duel', English *earnest*; Av *arənu-* 'battle', OI *sam-ará-* 'fight, contest', *ɾṇóti* 'arises, moves, reaches, attacks', etc.[94] Mees proposes that PIE "**H₁er-(e)l-* probably had a meaning 'great one, able one, proper one', i.e. 'noble, lord'." This **H₁er-*² is homophonous with our **H₁er-*¹ 'member of one's own clan' (see above, section **B** and **Table 2**), but with a distinct meaning (semantic range), thus the two roots would be originally unconnected homonyms. Mees derives both PG **er(i)laz* (ON *iarl*, etc.) and **ermin- / *ermun-* (ON *iǫrmun-*, etc.) from **H₁er-*², while here we derive both from **H₁er-*¹. Only the latter solution is consistent with the equations *iarl* = *arya* and *iǫrmun-* = *aryaman-*, as proposed in **Table 2**.

Therefore it is suggested here that there are other factors, mainly functional correspondences (section **C** and **Table 4**) and cosmology (see section **E**), that support the hypothesis of common origin of *iǫrmun-* and *aryaman-*. For example, OE *eormen-lēaf* 'mallow' makes no sense as 'great / immense / elevated herb', and the genitive forms in the OS place name *Ermenes-werethe* (see above) and the cosmological terms *Irmines-wagen* and **Eormenes-strǽt* are parallel with the genitive of OI *Aryamṇáḥ pánthāḥ*, i.e., formed from a (proper) noun, in our hypothesis here, namely the god **Ermina-* (~ **Ermuna- / *Ermana-*), a cognomen of **Tīwaz* that apparently replaced the primary name of the Germanic sky and war god in some regions (Saxony, Thuringia).

III.C. Functional correspondences

In Dumézil's tripartite scheme of Indo-European mythology the "first function" involves sovereignty, law, contract, magic and religion.[95] Within this Aryaman protects the Aryan nation and assures its duration and cohesion; gifts and hospitality.[96] In the *Vedas* Aryaman is associated with marriage (as an alliance between families) and gift-giving, both aspects of the contractual function.[97] To this day Vedic prayers invoking Aryaman are used in Hindu marriage rites:

> *ghṛbhṇāmi te saubhaghatvāya hastaṃ mayā patyā jaradaṣṭiryathāsaḥ /*
>
> *bhagho aryamā savitā purandhirmahyaṃ tvādurghārhapatyāya devāḥ //*
>
> Ṛgveda X.85.36
>
> "I take thy hand in mine for happy fortune that thou mayst reach old age with me thy husband.

[93] Mees (2003), pp. 47-50.
[94] Pokorny (1959) I: 142; Vries (1962), pp. 105, 295; Kroonen (2013), p. 35.
[95] Summarized by Littleton (1966), pp. 7-9.
[96] Dumézil (1958), p. 68; Dumézil (1973), p. 49; Dumézil (1977), pp. 96-7.
[97] Atharva-Veda 14.1: *aryamáṇaṃ yajāmahe subándhuṃ pativédanam* / 'we sacrifice to Aryaman, god of good alliances, who finds a husband' (Dumézil 1977: 97).

> Gods, Aryaman, Bhaga, Savitar, Purandhi, have given thee to be my household's mistress."

ā naḥ prajāṃ hanayatu prajāpatirājarasāya samanaktvaryamā ।
adurmaṅghalīḥ patilokamā viśa śaṃ no bhavadvipade śaṃ catuṣpade ॥

Ṛgveda X.85.43.

> "So may Prajāpati bring children forth to us; may Aryaman adorn us till old age come nigh.
> Not inauspicious enter thou thy husband's house: bring blessing to our bipeds and our quadrupeds." (Translations by Griffiths, 1896).[98]

Table 4. Functional correspondences:

	God / Hero	**Social cohesion**	**Marriage**	**Ancestry, progeny**	**Healing, sustenance**	**Free movement, roads**
Indic	Aryaman	protection of Aryan nation, its duration and cohesion; gifts and hospitality	marriage as alliances between families	king of the Fathers (*Pitáraḥ*); *purujātá-* 'having great progeny'	? *aryaman-* = 'the *arka* plant'	free movement on roads; *Aryamṇáḥ pánthāḥ* 'Milky Way'
Iranian	Airiiaman (Sraoša)	(Sraoša) is lord of *Ērān vēž*; protects community of the pious (of Mazdeism)	Airiiaman connected with marriage rituals	(Sraoša) leads the soul to a tribunal of judges (that includes Sraoša)	Airiiaman invented *gaomaēza* ritual of healing, and others	(Sraoša) assures free circulation (of cosmos and supernatural beings)
Celtic	Éremón	arranged hereditary succession for the Irish	provided wives to his allies	numerous progeny includes the kings of Ulster	protection from poisoned arrows	builder of causeways and royal roads
Germanic	OS Irmin- OHG Irmin-, Erman-, Ermun-, OE eormen-, ON iǫrmun-, iarmun-	OE *eormenþēod* = OS *irmintheod* = OHG *irmindiot* 'the collective human race'	—	*Erminus* patriarch of the Saxons, et al.; OE *eormenstrȳnd* 'progenies'	OE *eormen-lēaf, eormen-wyrt* 'mallow' (medicinal plant)	**Irmin(es)-strasse* = Milky Way OE *Ermingestrete* (great highway of Old England)

[98] http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/rigveda/rv10085.htm

As one of the *Ādityas,* Aryaman is closely associated with Mitra (contract) and Varuṇa (magico-religious), the first function deities that parallel the Nordic Týr and Óðinn. He is described in the *Ṛgveda* as *purujātá-* 'having great progeny', which together with the form of his name suggests close connection with the collective life of the *árya-* community, whose cohesion is a direct result of the contract function. Another function of Aryaman is the free circulation of roads, with epithets such as *átūrtapanthā* 'whose path cannot be cut' and *pururátha* 'having many chariots'.[99] Aryaman was also "a god of rain and of fertility who is essentially helpful to man,"[100] but the extension of this function to healing is more evident in Iranian Airiiaman and Celtic Éremón (see below). A connection with healing might help us make sense of the gloss of *aryaman* as 'the *arka* plant', i.e. *Calatropis gigantea*,[101] which has medicinal uses, among others:

> An acrid milky juice flows from every part of the shrub when wounded, and this the natives apply to medicinal purposes in many different ways, besides preparations of the plant itself in epilepsy, paralysis, bites of poisonous animals, and as a vermifuge.[102]

In Germanic, see below about OE *eormenlēaf, eormenwyrt*. In the later epic literature Aryaman is known primarily as king of the Fathers (*Pitáraḥ*) or collective ancestry, with the epithet *purujātá-* 'having great progeny'.[103] As such, his path, accessed by the proper ritual, souls to the gods (see section **E. Cosmology**):

> *yad āhur* ***aryamṇaḥ panthā*** *ity eṣa vāva devayānaḥ panthāḥ /*
> *pra devayānaṃ panthānam āpnuvanti ya etad upayanti //*
> Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa XXV.12.3-4

> "The path called Aryaman's path is the path leading to the gods.
> They who undertake this (rite) reach the path leading to the gods."
> (Translations by Griffiths, 1896).[104]

In Iranian traditions some of the same functions of Indic Aryaman are associated with Av *Airiiaman*, Middle Persian *ērmān* 'friend' and Classical Persian *ērmān* 'guest' (see **Table 2**).[105] The healing function is not prominent in Indic traditions, but in Old Iranian Airiiaman was associated with rituals of healing, and invented the *gaomaēza*, ritual.[106] (See below for a Celtic parallel). In Zoroastrianism it seems

---

[99] Rig-Veda Dumézil (1977), p. 98.
[100] Carnoy (1918), p. 295. "It is only reasonable to regard [Airiiaman's] functions of healer in Iran as a secondary but very natural development out of these elements [god of rain and of fertility who is essentially helpful to man]."
[101] Apte (1965), p. 153.
[102] Drury (1873), p. 100.
[103] Dumézil (1973), p. 50; Dumézil (1977), pp. 101-2.
[104] http://gretil.sub.uni-goettingen.de/gretil/1_sanskr/1_veda/2_bra/pncvbr2u.htm
[105] Puhvel (1987), p. 182.
[106] And decontamination, filling furrows with bull-urine: Puhvel (1987), pp. 49, 101, 119, 182.

that many of the traits of Airiiaman were transferred to *Sraoša* ('obedience').[107] Thus Sraoša is the lord of *Ērān vēž*, who protects the community of the pious (of Mazdeism).[108] As Indic Aryaman assures the free circulation of roads, Sraoša assures free circulation of the cosmos and supernatural beings.[109] In the afterlife Sraoša leads the soul to a tribunal of judges that includes Sraoša.[110]

Both Uhlenbeck (1898) and Dumézil (1941) have suggested an Irish legendary hero *Airem* (*Érémón, Érimón*) as a possible cognate to *Aryaman*. The Old Irish *Lebor Gabála Érenn* (Book of the Taking of Ireland) states that the sons of Míl, Éber and Éremón, came into Ireland to avenge the death of their great uncle Íth. They were among 36 chieftains who conducted the Gaels into Ireland to fight the Tuatha Dé Danann (aborigines). It is also related that Éber and Éremón contended for kingship of the land, with the result that they were given the South and North, respectively. The numerous progeny of Éremón is said to include the kings of Ulster.[111] Here we have a legendary figure who is closely tied to the collective life of the nation, with the ideals of kinship and revenge (contract), and, like Aryaman, with the functions of ancestry and great progeny. Éremón was a "… builder of causeways and royal roads … arranged a protection against poisoned enemy arrows … provided wives to his allies and arranged for hereditary succession in favor of the Irish, his own people …"[112] His numerous progeny (cf. Aryaman's *purujātá-*) includes the kings of Ulster.[113] Is it possible that here, as elsewhere, a divine figure has descended to the mortal, heroic realm?[114] In this case, the monks who wrote the old tales were motivated to demote the old gods to a heroic level.[115]

The functions of the obscure Germanic Irmin/Iǫrmun- are difficult to trace at this late date. Nevertheless, in many of the terms containing the name we can glimpse a sense of the collective or contractual function associated with Aryaman. The *Irminsūl*, for example, was recognized as a "*universalis columna*," the *Weltsäule* that connected the Nine Worlds, and the same sense is apparent in terms such as *irmintheod* 'the collective human race'. As noted above, Irmin or Iǫrmunr is usually identified with the first function gods, Týr and Óðinn. In the tribal names *Herminones* and *Hermunduri* we again see a connotation of the collective, or possibly descent from a legendary ancestor. *Erminus* (with variants *Ermenus,*

[107] Cf. Russian *slušat'* 'to listen', [refl.] *slušat'sja* 'to obey', etc.: Buck 1949, no. 19.46; Dumézil 1958, pp. 70-71; Dumézil 1973, p. 50; Puhvel 1987, p. 119.
[108] Dumézil (1958), pp. 70-71; Dumézil (1973), p. 50; Dumézil (1977), pp. 140-41. Pehlevi *Ērān vēž* = Av *Airyanəm vaējah* 'dwelling (homeland) of the Iranians'.
[109] Dumézil (1977), p. 143.
[110] Dumézil (1973), p. 50; Dumézil (1977), p. 143.
[111] Macalister (1938-), pp. 21-47. "While the L[ebor] G[abála] in general may be described as a deliberate work of fiction … one of the chief motives … was a desire to unify the country by obliterating the memory of the different ethnic origins of the people" (O'Rahilly 1957, pp. 193-4).
[112] Puhvel (1987), p. 182.
[113] Macalister (1938-), pp. 21-47.
[114] Cf. *Erminus*, as legendary ancestor of the Saxons and others (see below).
[115] "The gods [were] … retired to what is sometimes called the 'lower mythology.' In subtlety the Irish solution outshines downright demonization of the onetime pagan gods in Christianized cultures" (Puhvel 1987, p. 178).

Ermenius, etc.) is cited in a medieval "Table of Nations" as an ancestor of the Goths, Vandals, Gepids, and Saxons, thus, like Aryaman and Éremón, of 'great progeny' (*purujātá-*).[116] Cf. OE *eormenstrȳnd* 'progenies'.[117] In regard to the healing function (especially prominent in Iranian Airiiaman and Irish Éremón), OE *eormen-lēaf, eormen-wyrt* 'mallow', which makes no sense as 'great (immense) leaf' or 'great (immense) wort (herb)', could perhaps be understood as 'Irmin's herb', associated with a god of healing.[118]

The correlations shown in Table 4 are not always perfect, as would be expected after millennia of separate development. Especially in Germanic, the least peripheral of the traditions, some functions are more weakly attested than in Celtic and Indo-Iranian; for example, I have found no strong evidence of the marriage function in Germanic.

III.D. Personal names

German names derived from element *irmin-/irman-* have been mentioned above (**Table 1**), and these were especially common in Old High German, combined with elements such as *-degan* 'servant, warrior' (ON *þegn*), *-deo* 'servant' (ON *-þér*), *-frit* 'peace, defense', *-drūt* 'strength' (ON *þrūðr*).[119] The same elements are sometimes in combination with the divine name (Frankish *Ansedeus*, ON *Ragnþrūðr*),[120] but also with battle terms or other elements. If the *irmin-* names have a divine referent we would expect to find similar personal names in Sanskrit, and such names did indeed occur, e.g.: *Aryama-datta-* 'given by Aryaman' and *Aryama-rādha-* 'favored by Aryaman'.[121] The letter name element, *rādha-,* is also frequent in Germanic, so that *Aryama-rādha-* in Indic is formed in the same way as OHG *Anserāda, Ansrat* and ON *Ásráðr* (from **ansaz* > *áss* 'god'), and in fact *Aryama-rādha-* has a precise parallel in OHG *Irmin-rat* [woman's name] 'helped by Irmin'.[122] In the light of this evidence it seems more likely that the *irmin-* names originally bore the sense of a god Irmin rather than the meaning 'great, immense' that was traditionally favored.

---

[116] "Frater eorum Erminus genuit Gothos, Walagotus, Wandalus, Gepedes et Saxones." This work apparently represented "efforts to integrate Roman and Frankish history in the first half of the seventh century" (Reimitz 2015, pp. 216-17); cf. Mommsen & Müllenhoff (1863), pp. 532-4: "die fränkische Völkertafel" is found in at least 6 manuscripts; cf. Vries (1956), I, p. 486.

[117] Grimm (1882) I, p. 118; 'permagna generatio' (Bosworth 1898).

[118] "**Marshmallow**–Emollient, demulcent, pain-soothing and lubricating" (Meyer 1934, p. 134). Scientific name is *Althaea officinalis*, in which *Althaea* is derived from Greek ἄλθομαι 'to get cured or healed'.

[119] Grimm (1882), p. 351.

[120] Vries (1962), p. 609: *þér* (3); p. 624: *þrūðr*.

[121] Monier-Williams (1899): *aryaman*. For example, one Aryamarādha Gobhila was one of the teachers of Vanśa of the *Sāma-veda*, according to Müller (1860), p. 443.

[122] Toporova (1996), p. 39, no. 48; Zollinger (1939). A particular Irminrat was a female founder of the Lorsch Abbey in Hesse in 806 CE: "In Christi nomine sub die III. kalendas Aprilis, anno XXXVIII, Karoli imperatoris. Ego Irminrat dono ad sanctum Nazarium etc in pago Moynachgowe in Rumphenheim et in Bellingen et in Ewicheim VI hubas et mancipia XL, etc." (Reimer 1891, p. 8).

III.E. Cosmology

In the OI *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* and *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa* the Milky Way galaxy is called *Aryamṇáḥ pánthāḥ*, that is, the 'path of Aryaman', apparently because of the role of that god as king of the ancestral Fathers.[123] The *Ṛgveda* connects the ancestors with the constellations in the verse, "Like a dark steed adorned with pearl, the Fathers have decorated heaven with constellations" (X.68.11); cf. the ancient Germanic belief: "animas non perire; sed post mortem iis diuinitatibus uniri & astris inseri / souls do not perish; but after death they are united with the divinities and mingled with the stars" (see **Appendix A**). In Hindu astrology Aryaman presides over one of the 28 *nakṣatras* (lunar mansions, or asterisms, into which the sky is divided) named *aryamākhya* or *aryamadeva*.[124]

Of the old Germanic cosmology we seem to be left with only a few tantalizing remnants. Grimm cited *Irmineswagen* as an old German name for the Big Dipper or Great Bear.[125] The likening to a wagon is widespread, as we know from some other names for the same constellation: e.g. Swedish *Karlavagnen* (OE *carles wǣn*, etc., most likely a reference to *Þórr karl*),[126] and Middle Dutch *Woenswaghen* (i.e., Óðinn's).[127] To interpret *Irmines-* as a genitive of a God's name (cf. OI *Aryamṇás*) is supported by the god's names in the Swedish and Dutch terms. Descending from the heavens we find such other cosmological terms as *Irminsūl*, the world pillar, and *Iǫrmungandr*, the world serpent. There is abundant evidence from comparative mythology that the concept of a world tree or pillar supporting the sky was widespread in primitive consciousness.[128] I have already alluded to the hitching post concept reflected in OI *aśvattha-* and ON *askr yggdrasils*. Many peoples believe that the dead ascended the tree or pillar to take a place in heaven as stars, as hinted in the *Ṛgveda* (see Appendix A).

Furthermore, the combination of serpent and tree is an ancient archetype and motif, best known to us in the West as the story of Eden (the Tree of Life and the serpent Satan) and the caduceus, symbol of medicine. The typical belief, reported from a tribe in the Philippines, is that the world rests on a great post which a large serpent is endeavoring to take away.[129] When the snake shakes the post, the earth quakes. We know of a similar concept from the *Poetic Edda*, namely the serpent which gnaws at the world tree (Grimm 35). There is no reason for separating this serpent, *Níðhǫggr*, from the World Serpent known variously in the *Poetic Edda* as *miðgarðsormr, iǫrmungandr*, or simply as *naðr* or *ormr*: all have sprung from the primeval archetype.

---

[123] Monier-Williams (1899): *aryaman*.
[124] Apte (1965), p. 153: अर्यमन्.
[125] Grimm (1882) I, p. 356. See Appendix A.
[126] Hellquist (1948) I, p. 447; later, in some languages, associated with Karl der grosse (Charlemagne).
[127] Hellquist (1948) I, p. 447; Grimm (1882), p. 356.
[128] Philpot (1897).
[129] Howey (1955), pp. 108-9, 405.

Grimm, in his discussion of *Irmin*, devoted much space to this cosmological riddle. He was especially intrigued by certain Old English passages which refer to the old names of four great highways traversing England, among which were Watlingestrete and Ermingestrete (< **Eormenes-strǣt*, per Grimm), the latter running from south to north.[130] Other English sources refer to the Milky Way galaxy as *Watlingestrete*; the implication is that the earthly roads were named after the corresponding celestial paths.[131] Finally Grimm exclaims, almost despairingly, "if this would but tell us of an *Irmines wec* ['Irmin's way'], all would come right."[132] Grimm indicated no awareness of the Indic *Aryamnáḥ pánthāḥ,* a term which supplies the 'Irmin's way' he urgently sought, though from another neck of the Indo-European woods. This correspondence, together with the other parallels listed above in sections (A) through (E), helps make a case for the ultimate identity of the obscure Indic Aryaman and even more elusive Germanic Irmin.

IV. Conclusions

Like Vries, I find the conventional derivation of Germanic *irmin-/irman-/iarmun-/iǫrmun-* (PG **ermina- / *ermana- / *ermuna-*)[133] from an aorist middle participle of a verb related to Gk ὄρνυμι 'stir (up), urge, incite' and OI *ṛṇóti* 'to arise, move, reach, attack' highly implausible. First, it seems unlikely that Germanic would preserve the ablaut series **er-mana-/-mina-/-muna-* for a verbal form which it did not otherwise use, and was extant only in Greek, Sanskrit and Avestan; second, the conventional semantic gloss '*excelsus, erhaben*, elevated' or 'gross / great' fits only *Irmin-sūl*, (and a few other compounds, like *iǫrmun-gandr*) and is in no wise consistent with OE *eormen-wyrt* or *eormen-lēaf*, a designation of the lowly mallow plant, while Grimm's explanation as **eormenes lēaf* 'Irmin's leaf' makes more sense, in view of the healing functions of Aryaman/Irmin (see **Table 4**).[134]

The etymology proposed here consists of a nominal formation with the suffix *-meno-* (or athematic **-men-*),[135] but unlike Vries, not with the root **h₁er-* 'to set in motion',[136] but with a homonym **h₁er-* 'member of one's own clan'.[137] In Proto-

[130] Grimm (1835), pp. 212 ff.; = Grimm (1882) I, p. 356 ff.
[131] "Die deutsche sage wuste von einem *Iringes wec auf der erde* und *an dem himmel*" (Grimm 1935, p. 2016); "So ist für England eine Irminstraße ... bezeugt, welche das Land von Süden nach Norden durchzog, und da der Himmelswagen Irmineswagen ... heißt, so muß auch die Himmelsstraße, die dieser Wagen befuhr, Irminstraße geheißen haben, wobei die innigen Beziehungen, die sich sür Iring und Irmin aus der Heldensage ergeben, in Betracht kommen. ... wir sehen also, daß sich die Straßen am Himmel und aus Erden entsprechen" (Simrock 1869, p. 203).
[132] Grimm (1835), p. 216: "...redete sie von einem *Irmines wec*, so fügte sich alles"; = Grimm (1882) I, p. 359.
[133] This alternation is analogous to those in, e.g., OE *æften* / ON *aptann* / OSw *apton* 'evening'; OHG *sibin / siban / sibun* 'seven', etc. (Noreen 1894, p. 63).
[134] Grimm (1835), p. 209; = Grimm (1882) I, p. 352.
[135] The formation of OI *aryamán-*, with nom. *aryamā́*, is as in *sad-mán-* 'sitter', *dā-mán-* 'giver', Greek ἡγεμών 'leader', Latin *sēmen* 'seed' = Church Slavic *sěmę* = OHG *sāmo* id., Gothic *hliuma* 'hearing' = Av *sraōman-* (< PIE **k̂leu-*), etc. (Kluge 1886, pp. 41-2).
[136] Pokorny (1959) I: 142; Mallory & Adams (1997), p. 506.

Germanic the formation of the name of the god was simply root + suffix (**er-mina- / *-mana- / *-muna-*), while in Celtic and Indo-Iranian a suffix **-i̯o-* (= **-yo-*) intervened between **h₁er-* and **-meno-*. Celtic and Indo-Iranian also agreed in the formation of the human designation as **h₁er-i̯o-*, while Germanic preferred instead **h₁er-elo-s* > **er-ilaz* (~ **er-laz*),[138] parallel in formation with e.g. OSw (Runic) karilR, ON *karl* 'man, churl, old man', OE *ceorl* ~ *cearl* (> *churl*), Dutch *kerel* 'guy, fellow', OHG *karal* id., (Latin) *Carolus* (< **Kar-ulaz*), etc., with an agent-noun construction like Latin *bibulus, crēdulus*, etc.[139] Such variations in suffix "choice" are very common in Indo-European, e.g. English *nave* (< PG **nabō-*) / *navel* (< PG **nablan-*); Latin *umbilīcus* (< PIE **H₃mbʰ-e/ol-*); Greek ὀμφαλος; OI *nábhya-* n. 'nave (of wheel)', *nā́bhi-* f. 'navel; nave'; cf. Latin *nouos*, Greek νέ[ϜΟ]ς, Old Church Slavic *novъ*, OI *náva-* 'new', vs. OI *návya-*, Lithuanian *naũjas*, Gaulish *Novio-*, Greek (Ionic) νεῖος, Gothic *niujis* (with **-i̯o-*), etc.[140]

So how did the phonetic and morphological forms of the *Irmin*-words/names, and their meanings, become so distorted and transformed over time? Grimm alluded to one of the morphological changes:

> If Sæteresdæg has got rubbed down to Saturday, Saterdach ..., so may Eritac point to a former Erestac ..., Eormenléaf to Eormenes léaf, Irmansul to Irmanessul ; we also met with Donnerbühel for Donnersbühel ..., Woenlet for Woenslet, and we say Frankfurt for Frankenfurt [Oxford for Oxenaford, &c.]. The more the sense of the name faded out, the more readily did the genitive form drop away ; the OHG. godes hûs is more literal, the Goth. guþhûs more abstract, yet both are used ...[141]

Gurevich has remarked on the gradual obsolescence of words like *iǫrmun-*, while they often persist in poetic language:

> Preserved as a part of some traditional compounds inherited from the past, the substantival epithet in the Old Norse poetic language lost its former productivity and became a rudimentary element with an obscure sense. Examples of such substantival elements with a lost meaning are well known. One may recall *jörmun-* and *fimbul-* (cp. *jörmungandr* and *fimbulvetr*);

---

[137] Probably = **ʔer-*, with ablaut variants **ʔor-* (> Hittite *ar-* [see Table 2]) /**ʔr̥-* (> Celtic **ar-*). I am grateful to V. Blažek for advice on this reconstruction. Cf. Proto-Indo-European **ʔer-/*ʔor-/*ʔr̥-* 'associated, related' (Bomhard 2015, pp. 730-31: see **Appendix B**).

[138] Some have thought also **er-ulaz* > Ἔρουλοι, *Heruli*, "a mysterious people, who may not have been a tribe at all, but a vikinglike band of warriors dedicated to the arts of war" (Haugen 1976, pp. 107, 123-4); cf. Mees (2003), with a different etymology.

[139] Noreen (1894), pp. 49, 86, 194; Buck (1949), no. 2.21; Dumézil (1973), pp. 118-125; Mees (2003), p. 44. In the *Rígsþula* the three sons of Heimdall are juxtaposed as *Jarl* 'noble', *Karl* 'freeholder', and *Þræll* 'thrall, slave' (< **þrāhilaR*).

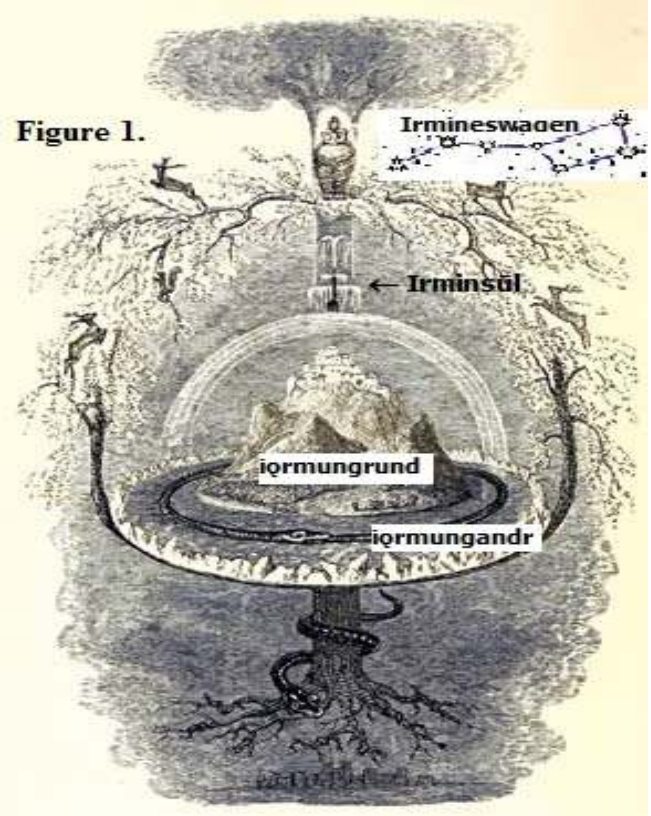
[140] Burrow (1955), p. 11; Pokorny (1959), I.130, II.324; Buck (1949), no. 4.43, 14.13; de Vaan (2008), p. 639; Kroonen (2013), pp. 380-81, 389.

[141] Grimm (1882) I, p. 352.

> probably the words went out of use very early and have survived only as first parts of a few mythological compounds.[142]

Besides the usual processes of phonetic, morphological, and semantic change, we can point to two major factors, (**a**) the tendency of innovations to spread from a geographic center, with archaisms preserved in peripheral regions, and (**b**) the misinterpretations, both deliberate and unintentional, by history writers and philologists, ancient and modern.

(**a**): Puhvel notes that "Celtic mythology seems to have perpetuated, at the far end of the Indo-European continuum, a match [in Nūadu-Eremon] for the Mitra-Aryaman structure at the other extremity — a notable instance of 'archaism of the fringe'"[143] Thus, the attestations of the *Iarl, Iǫrmun-*; *Aire, Eremon*; *Arya-, Aryaman-* family of names and words are most abundant at the geographic extremes, Ireland, Iran and India, somewhat fainter in Germania, and only sporadic in other IE regions (see **Table 4**).[144]



[142] Gurevich (1992), p. 48.
[143] Puhvel (1987), p. 182. It is well-known that mythological, and linguistic, archaisms tend to persist on the geographical peripheries of language families, and, at chronologically deeper levels, worldwide (Witzel 2012: 52, 57, 195-6).
[144] Note that the settlement of Germanic peoples in Iceland took place centuries after the settlement of Celtic speakers in Ireland.

Nevertheless, as fragmentary as the Germanic evidence is, we can tentatively postulate a comprehensive model of the Proto-Germanic mythological world view (**Figure 1**), in which several aspects of Irmin/Iǫrmun- can be integrated: OS *Irminsūl* (representing the *Weltachse*, World Tree, *Yggdrasil*); OHG *Irmineswagen* ('Irmin's wagon' = the Great Bear constellation), which travels on a hypothetical **Irmines wec* (= OI *Aryamnáḥ pánthāḥ*); ON *iǫrmungrund* (the earth, 'Irmin's ground' = OE *eormengrund*), upon which live OHG *irmindiot* = OS *irminthiod* = OE *eormenþēod* 'the collective human race'; and *iǫrmungandr* ('Irmin's wand' = World Serpent, *miðgarðsormr, Níðhǫggr*). Here we see rather sporadic attestation: some of the original terminology was preserved only in the North (*iǫrmungandr*), some remained in both ON and OE (*iǫrmungrund* = *eormengrund*), while some is only attested in the South (*Irminsūl, Irmineswagen*).

(**b**): At this conference Wim van Binsbergen discussed the challenges we face in interpreting the scraps of mythology left to us from decades or centuries ago. "Unpacking" myths from earlier sources may give them another layer of meaning, foreign to the original bearers of the myths; thus we run the risk of creating artefacts of text-based scholarship. I think this is what happened in the case of Germanic *Irmin/Iǫrmunr*, and the supposed glosses 'huge, great, swollen'[145] may just be such "artefacts of scholarship," and not necessarily the original meaning.

The relative paucity of information on these entities which has come down to us, caused by the factors discussed above, need not reflect a corresponding lack in their importance to the cultures which they were known. It is more likely that Aryaman/Irmin and the related cosmological terminology constituted such a basic everyday part of pre-Christian life that no one took extraordinary pains to document it. Both in India and Germania the entity in question is closely related to some kind of ancestral cult, so that an observation of Folke Ström is relevant here:

> The literary sources in the Nordic countries are remarkably scanty in terms of unambiguous information about the ancestor-cult, since it is difficult to distinguish between this [ancestor-cult] and the worship of beings other than the deceased.[146]

In other words, literature, with its penchant for the exceptional and the dramatic, seldom touched on the everyday life in which the ancestor cult was expressed. This, together with the zeal of the Church to eradicate all traces of heathen belief, may account for the lack of information we now are left with regarding Irmin and his cosmological correlates.

We must therefore distinguish between the pre-Christian metaphysical concept of *Irmin/Iǫrmunr* and the post-Christian, literary meaning of the same. The oldest

[145] E.g., Mees (2003), p. 49.
[146] "De litterära källorna i Norden äro påfallande torftiga i fråga om otvetydiga uppgifter om f[örfäderskulten], då det är vanskligt att skilja mellan denna och dyrkan av andra väsen än de hädangångna" (F. Ström 1960, p. 121).

sources, and comparative mythology, point to some kind of divine (or secondarily, heroic) entity closely connected with the sovereign deity and ancestry or the collective life of the people. The post-Christian literary tradition, whether German, English or Nordic, drew upon the pagan tradition that transformed it radically, just as all of society and worldview was transformed. Thus, the interpretations of 'great, expanse, mighty', and so on, are quite correct as far as the medieval literary tradition is concerned. But the piecing together of the pre-Christian entity from the scraps left to us leads to quite a different conclusion.

* * * * * * *

Acknowledgments: I am grateful to my mentors at the University of Minnesota, Kaaren Grimstad and Nils Hasselmo, for their guidance on this topic (1977), and to Edgar C. Polomé for his correspondence with me about these ideas (1985-86). More recently I am thankful to Václav Blažek, Yuri Kleiner, and Michael Witzel for valuable suggestions and corrections.

References

Abel, H.F. Otto. 1889, *Die deutschen Personen-Namen*. 2nd Ed. by Walter Robert-Tornow. Berlin: Wilhelm Hertz.

Aistleitner, Joseph. 1963, *Wörterbuch der ugaritischen Sprache*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag.

Antonsen, Elmer H. 1975, *A Concise Grammar of the Older Runic Inscriptions*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Apte, V.S. 1965, *The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

Bartholomae, Christian. 1904, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch*. Strassburg: Karl J. Trübner.

Beekes, Robert, & Lucien van Beek. 2010, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek*. Leiden: Brill.

Bellows, Henry Adams. 1936, *The Poetic Edda. Two Volumes in One*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Black, J.A., A.R. George, & J.N. Postgate. 2000, *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian*. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag.

Bomhard, Allan R. 2015, *A Comprehensive Introduction to Nostratic Comparative Linguistics: With Special Reference to Indo-European*. Charleston, South Carolina.

Bosworth, Joseph & T. Northcote Toller. 1898, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*. Oxford.

Buck, Carl D. 1949, *A Dictionary of Selected Synonyms in the Principal Indo-European Languages*. Chicago / London: University of Chicago Press.

Burrow, T. [Thomas]. 1955, *The Sanskrit Language*. London: Faber & Faber.

Carnoy, A. 1918, "The Iranian Gods of Healing." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 38: 294-307.

Cleasby, Richard. 1874, *An Icelandic-English Dictionary*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Cleasby, Richard, & Gudbrand Vigfusson [Guðbrandur Vigfússon]. 1957, *Icelandic-English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Dolgopolsky, Aharon. 1998, *The Nostratic Hypothesis and Linguistic Paleontology*. Cambridge: The McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research.

Dolgopolsky, Aharon. 2008, *Nostratic Dictionary*. Cambridge: The McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research.

Drury, Heber. 1873, *The Useful plants of India*. London: William H. Allen & Co.

Dumézil, Georges. 1941. "Le nom des *Arya*." *Revue de l'histoire des religions,* 124, pp. 36-59.

Dumézil, Georges. 1949, *Le Troisième Souverain*. Paris: G.P. Maisonneuve.

Dumézil, Georges. 1958, *L'idéologie tripartite des Indo-Européens*. Brussels: Latomus (revue des études latines).

Dumézil, Georges. 1973, *Gods of the Ancient Northmen*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Dumézil, Georges. 1977, *Les dieux souverains des Indo-Européens*. Paris: Éditions Gallimard.

Eckhart, Johann Georg von. 1729, *Commentarii de rebus Franciae orientalis et episcopatus Wirceburgensis*. Würzburg.

Eckhart, Johann Georg von. 1750, *De Origine Germanorum : Eorumque vetustissimis coloniis, migrationibus ac rebus gestis*. Göttingen: Schmidh.

Giesebrecht, Adolf. 1837, "Über den Ursprung der Siegfriedsage." *Germania*. 2, 1837, pp. 203ff.

Gordon, E.V. 1957, *An Introduction to Old Norse*. 2nd Rev. Ed. Oxford: Clarendon.

Griffith, Ralph T.H. 1896, *Hymns of the Ṛgveda*. Translation.

Grimm, Jacob. 1815, *Irmenstrasse und Irmensäule: Eine mythologische Abhandlung*. Vienna: Jacob Mayer & Co.

Grimm, Jacob. 1835, *Deutsche Mythologie*. Göttingen: Dieterichschen Buchhandlung.

Grimm, Jacob. 1882, *Teutonic Mythology*. London: George Bell & Sons. [Translation of Grimm (1835), 4th Ed., by J.S. Stallybrass.]

Gurevich, Elena A. 1992, '*Þulur* in *Skáldskaparmál*: An attempt at Skaldic lexicology.' *Arkiv för nordisk filologi,* 107, pp. 35-52.

Hall, John R. Clark. 1916, *A Concise Anglo–Saxon Dictionary for the Use of Students*. Second Edition. New York: Macmillan.

Haug, Martin. 1854, 'Über den ältesten Namen der sogenannten Indogermanen und ihren Stammesgott.' *Allgemeinen Monatsschrift für Wissenschaft und Literatur*.

Haugen, Einar. 1976, *The Scandinavian Languages: An Introduction to Their History*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Hellquist, Elof. 1948, *Svensk etymologisk ordbok*. 3rd Ed. Lund: Gleerups.

Holder, Alfred. 1896–1907, *Alt-celtischer Sprachschatz*. Leipzig: B.G. Teubner.

Hoops, Johannes. 2000, *Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde*. 2nd Ed. Berlin / New York: Walter de Gruyter.

Howey, M. Oldfield. 1955, *The Encircled Serpent*. New York: Richmond.

Jóhannesson, Alexander. 1956, *Isländisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*. Bern: Francke.

Jónsson, Finnur. 1966, *Lexicon Poeticum antiquæ linguæ septentrionalis*. 2nd Ed. København: Atlas.

Kloekhorst, Alwin. 2008, *Etymological dictionary of the Hittite inherited lexicon*. Leiden: Brill.

Kluge, Friedrich. 1886, *Nominale Stammbildungslehre der altgermanischen Dialecte*. Halle: Max Niemeyer.

Kroonen, Guus. 2013, *Etymological Dictionary of Proto-Germanic*. (Leiden Indo-European Etymological Dictionary Series 11.) Leiden / Boston: Brill.

Lehmann, Winfred P. 1986, *A Gothic Etymological Dictionary*. Leiden: E.J. Brill.

Lete, Olmo. 2003, *A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition*. Leiden/Boston: Brill.

Littleton, C.S. 1966, *The New Comparative Mythology*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Macalister, R.A.S. (Ed., Transl.) 1938-, *Lebor Gabála Érenn: The book of the taking of Ireland*. Dublin: Educational Co. of Ireland.

Mallory, James P., & Douglas Q. Adams (Eds.). 1997, *Encyclopedia of Indo-European Culture*. London and Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers.

Mayrhofer, Manfred. 1992, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindoarischen*. Heidelberg: Carl Winter.

Mees, Bernard. 2003, "Runic **erilaR**." *NOWELE* 42: 41-68.

Meyer, Joseph E. 1934, *Nature's Remedies: Early history and uses of botanic drugs as reveled in the legends and anecdotes of ancient times*. Hammond, Ind.: Indiana Botanic Gardens.

Meyer, Richard. 1910, *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte*. Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer.

Mommsen, Theodor, & Karl Müllenhoff. 1863, *Verzeichniss der römischen Provinzen aufgesetzt um 297*. Berlin: Königlichen akademie der wissenschaften.

Monier-Williams, M. 1899, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*. Oxford: Clarendon.

Müllenhoff, Karl. 1900, *Deutsche Altertumskunde*. Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandel.

Müller, Friedrich Max. 1860, *A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*. 2nd Ed. London / Edinburgh: Williams & Norgate.

Noreen, Adolf. 1894, *Abriss der urgermanischen Lautlehre: mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die nordischen Sprachen, zum Gebrauch bei akademischen Vorlesungen*. Strassburg: K.J. Trübner.

O'Rahilly, Thomas Francis. 1957, *Early Irish history and mythology*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies.

Orel, Vladimir. 2003, *A Handbook of Germanic Etymology*. Leiden / Boston: Brill.
Philippson, Ernst Alfred. 1962. 'Phänomenologie, vergleichende Mythologie und germanische Religionsgeschichte.' *PMLA,* 77, pp. 187-193.

Philpot, J.H. 1897, *The Sacred Tree; or, the tree in religion and myth*. London: Macmillan.

Pokorny, Julius. 1959, *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*. Bern: Francke.

Puhvel, Jaan. 1984–, *Hittite Etymological Dictionary*. Berlin: Mouton.

Puhvel, Jaan. 1987, *Comparative mythology*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Rastorgueva, Vera, & Džoi Ėdel'man, 2000. *Etimologičeskij slovar' iranskix jazykov*. [*Etymological dictionary of Iranian languages*.] Moscow, Vostočnaja literatura, RAN.

Reimitz, Helmut. 2015, *History, Frankish Identity and the Framing of Western Ethnicity,* pp. *550–850*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Schmidt, Moritz, ed. 1867, *Hesychii Alexandrini Lexicon*. Jena: Sumptibus Hermanni Dufftii (Libraria Maukiana).

Schönfeld, Moritz. 1911, *Wörterbuch der altgermanischen Personen- und Völkernamen: nach der Überlieferung des klassischen Altertums bearbeitet*. Heidelberg: Winter.

Sigurðsson, Arngrímur, ed. 1970, *Íslenzk-ensk orðabók*. Reykjavík: Leiftur.
Simrock, Karl. 1869. *Handbuch der deutschen Mythologie: mit Einschluss der nordischen*. 3rd Ed. Bonn: Adolf Marcus.

Stokes, Whitley, & Adalbert Bezzenberger. 1894, *Urkeltischer Sprachschatz: Wortschatz der keltischen Spracheinheit*. (*Wörterbuch der Indogermanischen Sprachen*, by August Fick. Vierte Auflage. Zweiter Theil.) Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Ström, Åke V. 1975, "Germanische Religion." (*Die Religionen der Menschheit*, Band 19, 1.) Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer.

Ström, Folke. 1960, "Förfäderskult." *Kulturhistoriskt lexikon för nordisk medeltid*, 5, pp. 119-121.

Thieme, Paul. 1938, Der Fremdling im Rigveda. *Eine Studie über die Bedeutung der Worte "ari", "arya", "aryaman" und "ārya"*. Leipzig: Brockhaus.

Toporova, Tatjana V. 1996, *Kul'tura v zerkale jazyka: drevnegermanskie dvučlennye imena sobstvennye*. [*Culture in the mirror of language: old Germanic bisegmental proper names*.] Moscow: Škola «Jazyki Russkoj Kul'tury».

Turville-Petre, E. O. G. 1964, *Myth and Religion of the North: The Religion of Ancient Scandinavia*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Uhlenbeck, C.C. 1898-9, *Kurzgefasstes etymologisches Wörterbuch der altindischen Sprache*. Amsterdam: Müller.

Vaan, Michiel de. 2008, *Etymological Dictionary of Latin and the other Italic Languages*. Leiden: Brill.

Vigfusson, Gudbrand, & F. York Powell. 1886, *Grimm centenary; Sigfred-Arminivs, and other papers*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Vries, Jan de. 1930-1, 'Ginnungagap.' *Acta Philologica Scandinavica,* 5, pp. 41-66.

Vries, Jan de. 1952, 'La valeur religieuse du mot germanique *Irmin*.' *Cahiers du Sud,* 36, pp. 18-27.

Vries, Jan de. 1956-7, *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Vries, Jan de. 1962, *Altnordisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*. Leiden: Brill.

Witzel, E.J. Michael. 2012, *The origins of the world's mythologies*. New York / Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Zollinger, Gustav. 1939, "Wie wurden altdeutsche Personennamen zu Familiennamen?" *Veröffentlichungen der Schweizerischen Gesellschaft für Familienforschung*. Reihe I, Heft 7, pp. 28-64. Bern: Zentralstelle der Schweizerischen Gesellschaft für Familienforschung.

Appendix A:
Early (18th century) references to *Irmineswagen*.

Eckhart (1729), *Commentarii de rebus Franciae orientalis et episcopatus Wirceburgensis*, page 883:

> Crediderunt etiam ethnici maiores nostri *Irminum* in Coelum translatum in Arcto residere; unde Arctum *Irminsvvagen* appellarunt, quod Helvetii in *Herrenvvagen* corrupere.
> Our pagan ancestors also believed that *Irmin*, translated into into heaven, dwelt in Arctos [the Great Bear constellation]; hence they named Arctos *Irmins Wagon*, which the Swiss corrupted as *Herrenwagen* ['Lord's wagon'].

Eckhart (1750), *De Origine Germanorum*, page 397:

> Haec enim veterum fides erat, vt putarent, animas non perire; sed post mortem iis diuinitatibus uniri & astris inseri, quorum coniunctionem rebus aut bene aut male gestis meruissent. Sic via quoque lactea *Irminstrate*, & plaustrum siue sidus Vrsae maioris *der Irmineswagen* ab Arminio vocatum est.
>
> > Truly, the ancient belief was, and so they thought, that souls do not perish; but after death they are united with the divinities and mingled with the stars, which union is deserved by their deeds, whether well or ill. Thus the Milky Way [is called] *Irminstrate*, and the constellation Ursa major is called *der Irmineswagen*, after Arminius.

* * *

Appendix B:
Deep (Nostratic) background of PIE **H₁er-* 'member of one's own clan'

"The latter ancient [Indo-European, Uralic, Caucasian] populations and many others are now perceived by some as having spoken *Nostratic* languages. … The existence of their ancestor, Proto-Nostratic, at more than 12,000 years ago, may be regarded as highly likely. Therefore, some of our linguistic reconstructions in individual language families, such as Indo-European, may now be further backdated by many thousands of years, and the (few) religious items reconstructed so far for Nostratic allow us a first glimpse into the mythology of those distant Stone Age times" (E.J.M. Witzel).[147]

"There is also an external argument for reconstruction of **H₁-* [see **Table 2**], corresponding regularly to Afroasiatic **ʔ-*, in which there are promising cognates

[147] Witzel (2012), p. 60.

just with initial *ʔ- according to the *Nostratic Dictionary* by Aron Dolgopolsky [2008]" (V. Blažek).[148]

"Moscow School" Model of Nostratic
(Tower of Babel Project / Evolution of Human Language Project)[149]

Proto-IE

**ar(y)-* 'master' > Hittite *arawa-* 'frei', Lycian *arawã* 'abgabenfrei'; Old Indian *árya-*, *aryá-* m. `master, lord', *árya-* `Aryan'; Avestan *airyō* 'arisch'; Old Persian *ariya-* 'arisch'; Celtic: Gaulish *Ario*-manus; Ir *aire*, gen. *airech* gl. `primas'.

Proto-Altaic

**ā́ri* (~ **ḗra*) 'man': Proto-Turkic: **ēr* 'man'> Old Turkish, Turkish, Yakut, Tuva *er*, Tatar, Bashkir *ir*, Uighur *är*, Chuvash *ar* 'man', etc.; Proto-Mongolian: **ere* 'male, man' > Written Mongolian, Ordos *ere*, Kalmuck *erə*, Mogol *errä* id., etc.

Proto-Uralic

arV* (arwa*) 'relative on mother's side; (younger) brother of mother': Khanty (Ostyak): *oĺi* (V Vj.), *orti* (O), *wǫrtĭ* (Kaz.) 'Neffe, Sohn des Bruders (od. der Schwester), jüngerer Bruder der Mutter etc.', *oĺisakən* (Vj.) 'Mutterbruder und Kind seiner älteren Schwester zusammen', *oĺisat* 'Mutterbruder und Kinder seiner älteren Schwester zusammen', *jĺt́i* (Vj.), *åлt́* (Trj.), *ɔr `ne* (Kaz.) 'Tochter der älteren Schwester (des Vaters), Tochter des älteren Bruders des Mannes etc.', *ar `səχ* (O) 'Kind der älteren Schwester, Kind der Schwester des Vaters', *ɔrtĭweŋ* (Kaz.) 'Mann der Tochter der älteren Schwester etc.'; Mansi (Vogul): *oår* (LM), *å̊r* (N) 'mütterlicherseits verwandt', or 'сородичи по материнской линии, предки по матери', *jäɣnor ōr-nor* (K) 'родительская досада'; Hungarian: *ara* 'Braut; (altung.) Bruder der Mutter od. der Schwester; Schwiegertochter'.

Proto-Dravidian

ēr-* (ēḍ-*) 'male': Brahui *arē* (pl. *arisk*) 'male individual, person, husband'; Tamil *ēṟu* 'bull, male of certain animals (pig, deer, buffalo, sambar, tiger, lion)', *ēṟṟai*, (lex.) *ēṭṭai* 'male of any animal remarkable for physical strength'; Malayalam *ēṟu* 'bullock', *ēṟan* 'bull'; Kota *ēr*, Toda *ēr* 'male buffalo, bull', etc.

Proto-Afro-Asiatic

**ʔa-rway-* 'husband, wife; family/clan member': Proto-Semitic: **ʔary-* 'family member, relative' > Akkadian *āru* 'young man'; Ugaritic *ʔary*; Arabic *ʔarā-*; Old Egyptian *ỉry.t* 'friend' (fem.); Proto-East Chadic: **rway-* > Dangla *ròyà* 'friend', Mubi *rò* 'husband'; Bedauye *reero* 'relative', *ʔoor* 'child'; Cushitic: Awiya (Aungi) *ŋ-ära* 'husband'; Somali *oori* 'wife', *reer* 'clan',

[148] P.c. 2016.

[149] TB: http://starling.rinet.ru/main.html; EHL: http://ehl.santafe.edu/. This model is based on the work of V.M. Illič-Svityč (1934-1966), modified by S.A. Starostin (1953-2005) and associates. In this summary some simplifications and minor edits have been made, and references omitted. See website for complete details.

Rendile *arrari* 'clan'; Sidamo *aroo* 'husband', Darasa (Gedeo) *aroʔo*, Hadiya (Gudella) *aróʔo* id.; Omotic: Anfillo *aroo* 'husband' (< Cushitic?).

Dolgopolsky Model of Nostratic[150]

[120] Proto-Nostratic **ʔarV [= *ʔarV][151] 'member of the clan' >
Hamito-Semitic:

Semitic **ʔar-V-y-* > Ugaritic *ʾary* 'relative, member of the clan' ['fellow, friend, kin' / 'Anverwandter, Sippenmitglied' / 'congénere, amigo, afín']; [Arabic *ʔarā* 'an derselben Krippe stehen'; Old Akkadian *ayyaru* 'young man' > Young Babylonian *āru(m)* 'warrior'];[152] Egyptian *ỉry* 'belonging to; comrade', Demotic Egyptian *ỉry* 'comrade', Coptic: Bohairic *ēr* 'comrade, friend', Sahidic *eriw*, Bohairic *ariu, eriu* 'comrades'; Cushitic: Beja *ʾaraw* 'friend'; [East Cushitic **ɔar-* > Highland East Cushitic {Hudson} **aroɔo* 'husband' > Gedeo, Hadiyya *aroɔo*, Sidama, Kambatta *arō* id.; ? Rendile *áràm* 'man, husband, elder'; Agaw: Awngi {Hetzron} *ŋära* (< **ŋi-ara*) 'her husband'; Chadic **ɔarV* > West Chadic: Ron: Bokkos {Jungraithmayr} *reˈ* (pl. *ɔáryà*) 'man'; East Chadic: {Stolbova} **ɔarV* > Mokilko {J} *ɔéròwò* 'woman'; **tV-ɔVr-* 'girl' (**tV-* f. prefix) > Kera {Ebert} *tɜr* 'girl', Sumray {J} *dur* 'daughter'].

Indo-European:

Narrow Indo-European **aryo-* [**ɔaro- ~ *ɔarị̄o-*] 'member of the tribe'[153] > Old Indian *'aryaḥ* 'master of the house', *ar'yaḥ* '(hospitable) lord', *'ār(i)ya-* 'an Aryan person', Avestan *airyō*, Old Persian *ariya-* 'Median, Aryan person';[154] Old Irish *aire* 'free person' (> 'chief', prince').

? Uralic:

Ugric **arV* [= **arV*] or **arwa* 'relative belonging to one's mother's clan', 'mother's (younger) brother' > Old Hungarian *ara* 'brother', (early 18th c.) *ara* 'Schwiegertochter', Hungarian *ara* 'bride' (attested from 1792; a lexical innovation in the framework of the Hungarian 'language renewal'); Ob-Ugric: Kazïm Ostyak [Khanty] *wɔr-ti* 'mother's younger brother, his male

---

[150] Dolgopolsky (1998), p. 95. Some additions from the later (2008) version of the etymology are shown in brackets [ ]. Some additions were also provided by V. Blažek (p.c.).
[151] I.e., **V* is a vowel of uncertain quality, the evidence does not allow a precise vowel reconstruction.
[152] Aistleitner (1963); Black, et al. (2000); Lete (2003).
[153] D.Q. Adams reconstructed PIE **h₄eros ~ *h₄erị̄os* 'member of one's own ethnic group' ('freeman') > late PIE **arị̄o-* id. Mallory & Adams (1997), p. 213.
[154] Dolgopolsky also notes the borrowing of Indo-Iranian **arya-* > Finno-Ugric (or Finno-Permian) **orya* 'slave' > Finnish *orja*, Estonian *ori* 'slave, bondsman', etc., reflecting the social situation during language contacts on the central Eurasian steppes. Cf. Burrow (1949), pp. 23-27. An analogous situation is seen in the Yeniseian region: Kott *arɨn-gɨt ~ harangat ~ haranget* 'slave', Assan *xáranget* 'servant', vs. Arin *ar(a)*, which is simply the ethnonym 'Arin'. Other Sino-Caucasian cognates, such as Burushaski *hol* 'army, troops' (with anomalous /l/), Lak *ɋral* id. (Archi *ɋri* 'army', borrowed from Old Lak), Abaza *rə* 'army, troops', Basque *herri* 'people, nation, country', point to the original meaning '(our own) people', including its warriors. Sino-Caucasian **ʔwə̆ hri* is considered a probable remote cognate of Nostratic **ʔarV* 'member of the clan', according to TOB/EHL: http://starling.rinet.ru/cgi-bin/main.cgi?root=config&morpho=0

descendants, his son', Northern (Obdorsk) Ostyak *or-ti, or-di* 'mother's brother'; Middle Lozva Vogul [Mansi] *oår*, Northern Vogul *å:r* 'mother's relative', [Kondin Vogul *ōr* in *yäγnor ōrnor* 'parents', consisting of *yäγ* 'father', *nor* 'revenge'].

Bomhard Model of Nostratic[155]

637. Proto-Nostratic (n.)

**ʔar-a* 'associated or related person or thing; associate, companion, friend; kinsman, relative'; (adj.) 'associated, related':

A. Proto-Afrasian

**ʔar-* '(n.) associated or related person or thing; associate, companion, friend; kinsman; (adj.) associated, related': Semitic: Ugaritic *aỉry* 'kinsman'; Egyptian *ỉry, ỉrỉ* 'one who belongs to someone or something, one who is in charge, keeper; friend, associate, companion'; Coptic (Bohairic) *ēr* 'friend'; Proto-Southern Cushitic **ʔar-* 'kind, associated or related thing' > Iraqw *ado* 'way, manner'; Asa *ʔarato* 'twins'; Ma'a *mʔáro* 'neighbor; kind, associated or related thing'. …

B. Proto-Indo-European

**ʔer-/*ʔor-/*ʔr̥-* - 'associated, related': Sanskrit *arí-ḥ* 'devoted, trustworthy, loyal', *aryamā́* 'companion, host; the god of hospitality'; Avestan *Airiiaman-* 'friend, guest'; Hittite (nom. sg.) *araš* 'member of one's own social group, peer, comrade, partner, fellow, friend'.

[155] Bomhard (2015), pp. 730-31. In this summary some simplifications and minor edits have been made, and references omitted.